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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0445
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0098

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000401

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DOD PASS TO GETZ AND OSD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DASD GETZ VISIT TO PRAGUE

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On June 9 2008, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Colleen Getz visited Prague for meetings with Czech MoD and MFA officials to discuss ongoing and future Czech contributions to coalitions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The meeting provided a good opportunity to review the Czech deployments, progress of the Logar PRT, and future plans. The Czechs also discussed with A/DASD Getz a number of measures they are considering to address the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan's Logar Province. End Summary.

Discussion with MoD on Afghanistan and Iraq

¶2. (SBU) During meetings at Czech MoD, A/DASD Getz met with first Deputy Minister of Defense Bartak, Chief of Czech Military Intelligence and Special Operations Forces MG Palenik, Czech General Staff J3 BG Balint, and MoD Policy and Strategy Division Deputy Director Jahoda. The Czechs provided a survey of current and planned contributions to Afghanistan stressing their intention to concentrate Czech resources on two missions: the Czech PRT in Logar and the SOF deployment under OEF. Bartak noted that the 100-person Czech military field hospital located at the Kabul International Airport (KAIA) would redeploy by the end of 2008, while a small Czech Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) working with the Afghanistan Air Corps and a small national support element and NBC monitoring team will remain based at KAIA. Repeated deployments by some units like the Czech military hospital had stressed many low density Military Occupational Specialties and would pose a limiting factor in the future. Turning to 2009, Bartak noted the Czechs intended to deploy three Mi-171 helicopters to Regional Command-East (RC-E), but stated that securing pilots with the appropriate pre-deployment training as well as performing the required technical upgrades on the helicopters to be deployed was proving to be a sizable challenge.

¶3. (SBU) Bartak briefed A/DASD Getz on Czech concerns over the deteriorating security situation in the Logar Province. Bartak emphasized that following the recent deaths of two Czech soldiers, and the wounding of several others, the Czech government must show that is taking measures to adjust and improve the security of the PRT. The government's concerns are prompting the Czechs to deploy more combat forces to the province including the imminent planned deployment of a 20-man special MP unit that will be moved from Helmand to Logar and, by early 2009, an airborne company. The Czechs noted that they would require U.S. theater airlift support to transport this unit from Helmand to KAIA for onward ground transfer to Logar. Bartak also inquired about how best to move forward with the re-deployment of Czech civilian police trainers from the north to Logar, specifically requesting assistance in determining what kind of technical support

agreement would be required to allow the reimbursement by EUPOL to RC-E for life support costs at Logar.

¶4. (SBU) Citing a greatly increased IED threat in Logar and a slew of mechanical problems with their recently acquired fleet of 26 M1114 up-armored Humvees, the Czechs are grappling with determining what vehicles would be best suited for use by the Czech PRT. The Czech Government has approved an accelerated acquisition effort to identify and purchase new MRAP-like vehicles, but in the near term the Czechs have requested U.S. assistance in providing better protection to their personnel. Any new Czech armored vehicles, once acquired, will require U.S.-compatible radios and other equipment, which the Czechs are willing to purchase commercially, but may need U.S. assistance in this process.

¶5. (SBU) A/DASD Getz welcomed the Czech,s intentions to deploy more forces but noted that as Czech deployments increase so would the coordination and planning challenges they would face. Getz emphasized the need for a systematic and disciplined approach to communication, coordination, and issue tracking. She also noted that due to high demand there were no quick solutions with regard to purchasing U.S. tactical radios. However, A/DASD Getz suggested that the Czech Senior National Representative (SNR) in Tampa should maintain an active dialogue with the appropriate CENTCOM staff elements regarding their perceived equipment shortfalls.

¶6. (SBU) Concerning Iraq, the Czechs noted that they are in the process of re-deploying 100 soldiers from Basra back to the Czech Republic, while at the same time sending a detachment of T-72 trainers to assist in the training of

PRAGUE 00000401 002 OF 002

Iraqi military personnel at Taji under MNSTC-I. Deputy Minister Bartak noted that there is a possibility that the Czechs would offer to expand the size of their training mission at Taji in 2009.

MFA Focuses on Afghanistan PRT

¶7. (SBU) A/DASD Getz also met with the Deputy Director of the Security Policy Department at the Czech MFA, Petr Chalupecky. Chalupecky and the MFA,s PRT senior coordinator, Ester Lauferova, briefed Getz on current reconstruction activities. According to Lauferova, the Logar PRT has been able to achieve a number of successes, despite the increased security challenges that are hindering the ability of the Czech PRT to leave its Forward Operating Base.

The PRT,s original plans of conducting at least three missions per day have been revised downward given the worsening security environment. For the same reason, the Czechs have delayed plans to deploy two additional civilian reconstruction experts. Nevertheless, in its three months of operation, the Czech PRT conducted visits to all of Logar province,s seven districts, including the remote and mountainous district of Azara. The Czech PRT is working on increasing ties with an Afghanistan National Army unit recently deployed to Logar. They also look forward to the deployment of the Czech EUPOL team in order to strengthen their outreach to the districts, police units.

¶8. (SBU) Chalupecky and Lauferova noted that the Czech PRT is focusing on three key areas: education, public health, and irrigation. In all their projects, the Czechs want to ensure a maximum level of local Afghanistan ownership through the district shura rather than the provincial government. Instead of building new facilities, the Czechs are working to make existing facilities more effective. They have initially partnered with seven schools, but recently, two girls, schools receiving western aid in Logar have been destroyed by arson attacks. The PRT is also implementing an aquifer management project that leverages local tribal methods to

increase efficiency.

19. (SBU) COMMENT: The Czech Republic has only recently stepped into the role of a &lead-nation8 with its deployment of the Czech PRT to Logar in March 2008. That effort has thus far been successful. However, as the willingness of the Czechs to deploy more forces to Afghanistan has increased, so too have the coordination and planning challenges they face. The Czechs are relatively new to this and are still learning. Visits such as the one of A/DASD Getz can help the Czechs navigate the coordination processes in place and, in the process, become more effective partners for the United States. The Czechs, success as a PRT leader would prepare them for other missions in the future. Therefore, any assistance the USG can provide the Czechs in this mission is an investment that will likely pay off in future missions. End comment.
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